

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An integrated circuit for control of an electronic ballast, comprising:  
a current sense circuit for obtaining current measurements of current  
supplied by the electronic ballast;  
a current reference for comparison with the current measurement obtained  
5 by the current sense circuit;  
a first increased current reference established during an ignition phase of  
the electronic ballast to permit ignition at a higher current level than that determined  
by the current reference; and  
a second increased reference for establishing a threshold below which the  
10 current measurement falls after ignition.
2. The integrated circuit according to claim 1, further comprising:  
an input control signal related to setting a power level for the electronic  
ballast; and  
an initial power level related to ignition in the electronic ballast and being  
5 greater than the control input power level setting, whereby the power level adjusts  
from the initial power level to the control input power level after ignition.
3. The integrated circuit according to claim 2, further comprising a rate of  
change circuit for controlling the adjustment of the power level from the initial  
power level to the control input power level.
4. An electronic ballast for a fluorescent lamp, comprising:  
a current sense circuit for providing a current sense signal related to  
electronic ballast output current;

5 a reference signal for a comparison with the current sense signal to provide  
an indication of electronic ballast output current above a specified threshold related  
to the reference signal;

a reference signal adjustment circuit to modify the reference signal value  
to thereby modify the threshold for the electronic ballast current output determined  
by the current sense signal; and

10 the reference signal being modified during ignition to obtain a higher  
threshold value and a corresponding higher electronic ballast current output value so  
that ignition occurs at a higher power level.

5. The electronic ballast according to claim 4, further comprising:  
a control input signal for setting an output power level of the electronic  
ballast; and

an initial power level setting related to ignition, the initial power setting  
5 being greater than the control input power level setting.

6. The electronic ballast according to claim 5, further comprising a rate of  
change control circuit for adjusting the electronic ballast power level from the initial  
power level to the control input power level according to a specified rate of change.

7. A method for flash suppression during ignition of a lamp with an  
electronic ballast, comprising:

measuring an output current of the electronic ballast;

5 setting a threshold value for a power level of the electronic ballast related  
to ignition of the lamp;

increasing the current level output of the electronic ballast to a value above  
the threshold level;

reducing the threshold level to a value less than the power output level of  
the electronic ballast after ignition of the lamp has occurred; and  
10                   igniting the lamp and reducing the power output level of the electronic  
ballast below the reduced threshold.

8. The method according to claim 7, further comprising reducing the  
power level output of the electronic ballast to a value related to a control input  
setting.

9. The method according to claim 8, further comprising controlling the  
rate of change of the adjustments of the power level of the electronic ballast as the  
power level adjusts from the ignition power level to the power level associated with  
the control input setting.